

Message Text

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64

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-02 SY-04 FBIE-00 USSS-00 A-01 EB-24

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H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /144 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8294

INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BUENOS AIRES 7316

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, AR, MX

SUBJECT: GOM ASYLUM DECISIONS IN ARGENTINA

REF: A. BA-7258 AND B. BA-7158

1. THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO GRANT ASYLUM TO RODOLFO PUIGGROS AND RAUL LAGUZZI, BOTH PROMINENT LEFTISTS AND EX-UNIVERSITY RECTORS, IS CLOUDING GOA-GOM RELATIONS. JUSTICE MINISTER AND ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER ANTONIO J. BENITEZ, ASKED BY NEWSMEN ABOUT THE ASYLUM CASES, MAINTAINED THAT WHILE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE GOOD, THE MEXICAN ACTION HAD NOT BEEN A FRIENDLY ONE. HE POINTED TO PUIGGROS' STATEMENT AFTER DEPARTURE IN WHICH LATTER SAID HE HAD TAKEN ASYLUM TO CALL ATTENTION TO SITUATION IN ARGENTINA (RATHER THAN BECAUSE HE WAS LEGITIMATE ASYLEE).

2. IN HIS WIDELY READ POLITICAL COLUMN IN LA NACION, CLAUDIO ESCRIBANO QUOTES HIGH-LEVEL BUT UNNAMED FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCES WHO BELIEVE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE PUIGGROS CASE SUGGEST MEXICAN EMBASSADOR, CELSO HM DEGADO RAMIREZ, AND PUIGGROS HAD PREARRANGED THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ASYLUM,
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ALREADY HAVING ASKED FOR AND RECEIVED THE GOM'S APPROVAL. AS

THESE OFFICIALS POINT OUT, PUIGGROS REPORTEDLY ENTERED THE EMBASSY AT 11:30 PM ON THE 23RD AND WAS GRANTED ASYLUM 90 MINUTES LATER. WHEN AMBASSADOR RAMIREZ CALLED BENITEZ AT 2:00 AM TO INFORM HIM OF THE CASE, HE TOLD THE MINISTER THAT PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA HAD PERSONALLY MADE THE DECISION. FEW BELIEVE THAT ECHEVERRIA WOULD HAVE MADE THAT DECISION IN LESS THAN TWO HOURS DURING THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. FURTHER, SEVERAL OBJECTIVE ARGENTINE OFFICIALS HAVE POINTED OUT THAT MEXICAN AMBASSADOR COULD HAVE TAKEN STEPS TO GUARANTEE SAFE EXIT FOR BOTH MEN WITHOUT EMBARRASSING GOA BY GRANTING ASYLUM.

3. COMMENT. WHILE GOA PROBABLY WILL NOT RETALIATE OFFICIALLY FOR GOM ACTIONS, AMBASSADOR RAMIREZ MAY FIND COOLER RECEPTION IN OFFICIAL CIRCLES. MEXICANS MAY ALSO DRAW FIRE FROM THE RIGHT-WING TERRORISTS GROUP AAA FOR HAVING AIDED TWO PEOPLE ON THE LATTER'S DEATH LIST.
HILL

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